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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the development of a grant support unit in the Community College League of California's (CCLC) Ad Hoc Task Force on Grants and Development. A survey was developed and mailed during December, 1998, and again in January, 1999. In total, 92% of the 71 districts responded to the survey, 89% of the 106 campuses responded, and 100% of the 21 multi-college district offices responded. Findings of the survey indicate that few staff members have grant-writing and/or coordination of grants as a major part of their assigned duties. Other findings include: (1) 28% of the colleges responding indicated they have no staff with these responsibilities, 63% reported they have 1 to 2 staff members with these responsibilities, and the remaining 9% have 3 or more such staff members; (2) 84% of the colleges indicated that not having enough staff was "frequently" or "very frequently" a major reason for their lack of success; (3) district offices had even fewer of these staff members--38% reported no staff members with grant-writing or coordinating staff, and 48% reported having one or two such staff members; (4) 100% of district respondents reported not having enough staff as a "frequent" or "very frequent" impediment to success. Finally, the document reports on conclusions of the study and makes recommendations. (Contains 14 tables.) (Author/NB)

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Community College League of California

Community College Grant Survey

March 1999

ED 471 959

Executive Summary

California community colleges were surveyed by the Community College League of California (CCLC) during December, 1998, and January, 1999, to determine their current grant activity and their needs, interests and priorities for grant funding. The survey was suggested by the League's Ad Hoc Committee on Grants and Development as a means of determining whether CCLC could assist colleges in being more successful in the grants arena.

Ninety-two percent of the state's 71 districts responded to the survey. This included 89 per cent of the 106 campuses and 21 of the 21 multi-college district offices.

Most colleges and districts reported limited to moderate success in grants from all sources. Success was highest from government sources, with little success reported for foundation and corporate grants. However, 31 colleges reported they received over one million dollars from government grants, four reported over $1 million from foundation sources and one college had over $1 million from corporate sources during 1997-98. This provides both an indication of the potential available to community colleges and the hurdles to be overcome.

Limited staff and a host of other factors have restricted the ability of many colleges and district offices to be successful grant recipients. Most colleges and districts have only one or two staff members assigned to grant writing and coordination. Over a quarter have none.

Colleges and district offices said they were moderately well informed about government grants, but reported they have little or no information about foundation and corporate grants. Other factors that prevent them from being more successful are: insufficient staff or staff that is too busy, lack of timely information about grants, staff unskilled in writing proposals, partnerships too difficult to secure and grant writing not being a priority.

Strong interest was expressed by colleges and district offices in receiving services that would assist them in being more successful in obtaining grants. Over three-quarters of the colleges and district offices want regular information about grants, "boiler plate" information on California and its community colleges, help in forming partnerships for grants (required by many funding programs), technical assistance in proposal writing, assistance in forming coalitions with other colleges and districts and grant writing training for their staff.

Colleges and district offices identified their top priorities for funding as teaching strategies to improve classroom learning, economic development, instructional equipment, computers and student support services.

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There appears to be great potential for community colleges to augment their resources with grants from the public and private sectors. Colleges and district offices know their funding priorities and are interested in forming partnerships and coalitions to pursue funding. Provision of services by CCLC, as recommended in this report, could greatly enhance their opportunities for success.

Summary Report

Background:

Representatives of California's community colleges met in 1998 as the Community College League Ad Hoc Task Force on Grants and Development to discuss community college grant activities. The consensus of the meeting was that while some colleges and districts have had considerable success in augmenting their resources through competitive grants, many colleges experience a variety of impediments to success. The Task Force suggested that development of a grant support unit in the Community College League could be extremely useful. As a first step, the Task Force recommended that CCLC survey California's community colleges to determine their current grant activity and their needs, interests and priorities for grant support.

A survey instrument was developed and pilot tested in the fall of 1998. The Task Force reviewed the instrument and revisions were made based on its feedback. For the purposes of the survey, a grant was defined as *funds from external sources for which a proposal must be submitted and for which there is competition*. The survey was mailed during December, 1998 and again in January, 1999.

The response from districts and colleges was excellent. Ninety-two per cent of the 71 districts responded to the survey. Eighty-nine per cent of the 106 campuses responded. Twenty-one of the 21 multi-college district offices responded. For the purposes of this report, colleges in multi-college districts and single college districts are referred to as "colleges." Multi-college district offices are referred to as "district offices."

Findings:

Grant Writing Resources of California Community Colleges

Community colleges have few, if any, staff members who have grant writing and/or coordination of grants as a major part of their assigned duties. Indeed, nearly a third, or 28 per cent, of the colleges responding indicated they have no staff with these responsibilities. Sixty-three per cent reported they have one to two staff members with these responsibilities. The remaining nine per cent have three or more such staff members.

This factor was cited by colleges as a significant impediment to being more successful in the grants arena -- in fact, 84 per cent of the colleges indicated that not having enough staff was "frequently or "very frequently" a major reason for their lack of success.

District offices had even fewer grant writing or coordinating staff: 38 per cent reported no staff with these responsibilities and 48 per cent reported one or two such staff members. All, 100 per cent of those responding, cited "not enough staff to write grants" as a frequent or very frequent reason for lack of success.
Lack of information about available grants is a major impediment to grant success for staff who have grant responsibility. Some 20 percent of the colleges reported they have little or no information about government grants; 53 percent said they have little or no information about foundation grants and 65 per cent reported little or no information about corporate grants.

District office grant staff also suffer from lack of information. Some 15 per cent reported they have little or no information about governmental grants, 55 per cent have little or no information about foundation grants and 60 per cent have little or no information about corporate grants.

Grant Success and Limitations in California Community Colleges

There is considerable disparity in success with grants among California's colleges and district offices. Most reported limited to moderate success in grants from all sources: government, foundations, and corporations. Yet a few have had considerable success.

Some 27 per cent of the colleges said they have little or no success in securing government grants; 65 per cent reported little or no success with foundations and 79 per cent said they have little or no success with corporations. (In fact, a total of 49 colleges and 17 district offices reported no success at all in grants from any of the three sources.)

District offices reported similar significant lack of success. While 25 per cent indicated they have had little or no success with governmental grants, 70 per cent said they have had little or no success with foundations and 75 per cent said they have had little or no success with corporations.

Some colleges have been successful with government grants, with 39 per cent reporting "very" or "highly successful" rates. However, only 9 per cent said they have been "very" or "highly successful" with foundation grants and only 4 per cent of the colleges said they have been "very" or "highly successful" with corporations. Only six district offices out of 21 described themselves as "highly successful" in grants from government; only one indicated highly successful with private foundations and one with corporations.

The government provides the most grant funds to community colleges, followed by foundations, with corporate funding lagging behind. While over half of the colleges received $500,000 or more from the government last year, they received on average $100,000 or less from either foundations and corporations.

Thirty-one colleges reported income of $1 million or more from government sources last year. Four colleges reported receiving over $1 million from foundations and one reported $1 million from corporate sources. This level of success by a limited number of colleges points to the potential grant opportunities for other colleges.

District offices reported similar levels of success. Seventy-five per cent of the district offices reported government grants totaling $500,000 or more last year. However, only 10 per cent reported that amount of funding from foundations, and 15 per cent had that level from corporations.

Colleges were asked how often certain factors prevent them from being more successful in the grants arena. They responded "frequently" or "very frequently" as follows:

- Not enough staff to write grants (84 per cent)
- Staff too busy with other priorities (82 per cent)
- Information (about grants) not received in a timely manner (57 per cent)

Other difficulties cited were:

- Staff lacks knowledge/skills in grant writing (48 per cent)
- Partnerships required by grants are too difficult to secure (43 per cent)
- Not enough information about grants (34 per cent)

Some 37 per cent said that "frequently" or "very frequently" grant writing was not an institutional priority.

Responding to an open-ended question concerning lack of success in obtaining grants, respondents cited problems with information and processes at the state Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and U.S. Department of Education, along with lack of time and/or motivation for staff to write grants.

District offices likewise cited staffing problems as their primary reason for lack of success. One hundred per cent of district offices said "not enough staff to write grants" was "frequently" or "very frequently" a factor in lack of success and 74 per cent cited "staff too busy with other priorities."

In addition, nearly half of these district offices cited "not enough information about grants" and "grant writing not an institutional priority" as strong reasons. Over a third indicated that "information not received in a timely manner," "staff lacks knowledge/skills in grant writing" and "partnerships too difficult" prevented their success.

Grant Writing Support Requested By Colleges

Colleges and district offices responded positively when asked about the kinds of services that would allow them to be more successful in obtaining grants.

Over three-quarters of the colleges answered that the following services would be "helpful," "very helpful" or "extremely helpful:"

Regular information about available grants from government, foundations and corporations (85 per cent)

Boiler plate information on California and its community colleges (84 per cent)

Technical assistance in proposal writing (83 per cent)

Assistance in forming partnerships with public institutions, private agencies or business to apply for a grant (82 per cent)
Grant writing training for staff (78 per cent)

Assistance in forming coalitions with other colleges to apply for a grant (76 per cent)

Other write-in suggestions for assistance included:

Information on grant management issues

Information on experienced grant writers available as consultants to assist colleges

Improved grant information and processes from the state Chancellor's Office

Assistance in opening avenues to and determining priorities of private funding agencies

District offices indicated **even greater interest** in services to assist them in being more successful with grants. These offices overwhelmingly rated as "helpful," "very helpful" or "extremely helpful:"

Regular information about available grants from government, foundations and corporations (95 per cent)

Technical assistance in proposal writing (85 per cent)

Assistance in forming coalitions with other districts to apply for a grant (85 per cent)

Grant writing training for staff (80 per cent)

Assistance in forming partnerships with public institutions, private agencies or business to apply for a grant (80 percent)

Boiler plate information on California and its community colleges (75 per cent)

Other write-in suggestions for assistance from district offices were:

Electronic information about grants such as E-mail newsletter, and web site with boiler plate information on budget issues such as indirect rates.

Forums or video conferences with funding agencies

Grant Funding Priorities of California Community Colleges

Colleges were asked to select their **priorities for grant funds** from a list of topics. The highest priorities were:

Teaching strategies to improve classroom learning (79 per cent)

Instructional equipment (other than computers) (73 per cent)

Student support services (71 per cent)

Computers (65 per cent)

Other priorities were:

Community relations (40 per cent)

Welfare reform (34 per cent)

Economic development (32 per cent)

Colleges were asked to write-in other priorities; those cited the most frequently were:

Distance learning

Staff development, particularly in technology

Facilities

Curriculum development

The funding priorities of district offices were somewhat different:

Economic development (75 per cent))

Computers (65 per cent)

Teaching strategies to improve classroom learning (65 per cent)

Instructional equipment (60 per cent)

Student support services (60 per cent)

Welfare reform (55 per cent)

Community relations (40 per cent)

Several district offices added to that list: facilities and distance learning.

Colleges and district offices were then asked to list their **three highest priorities** for grant funding. The following five areas were at the top of the list, with equal emphasis:

Teaching strategies to improve classroom learning
Economic development

Instructional equipment

Computers

Student support services

District office top three priorities were:

Teaching strategies to improve classroom learning

Economic development

Student support services

Finally, colleges and district offices were asked to cite examples of highly successful programs funded last year. A long list with a wide variety of projects was reported. Most were in the following categories: child care, welfare reform, distance education, student success programs, new job training programs, bio-technical centers, curriculum development, a variety of programs relating to science education, programs for at risk and disadvantaged students, and technology.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The overwhelming response rate by colleges and district offices to this survey is a strong indication of the interest statewide in grants to augment resources and in obtaining services that would improve their grant solicitation efforts.

However, even though some California community colleges have been highly successful in the grants arena, garnering over $1 million last year from public and private sources, most colleges and district offices have had limited to moderate success. Lack of success is most striking from private foundations and corporations, considered by many to be increasingly significant reservoirs for special funding.

While some of the problems preventing colleges and districts from being more successful must be solved from within (i.e., lack of adequate staff), many of the impediments cited could be addressed by a variety of grant support services. Indeed, over three-quarters of the colleges and district offices expressed strong interest in the specific services listed in the survey. Colleges also asked for improvements in materials and processes at the state Chancellor's Office, a major source of grant funds for colleges. One can assume that provision of these services would allow colleges to enjoy much greater success.

The data from this survey provide the League with other information that will be a powerful tool in designing and implementing support services to colleges. For example, those colleges who have been extremely successful in obtaining grants could be used as resources and role models for other colleges, especially in the areas of foundation and corporate funding. Colleges can be linked in coalitions to pursue grants according to their funding priorities and, if desirable, according to their size or geographic location. In addition, funding agencies can be educated about community colleges' successes, needs and priorities for funding.

In summary, there appears to be great potential for community colleges to augment their resources for special projects with grants from both public and private sources. Colleges and district offices know their priorities for funding and many are interested in forming coalitions and partnerships to addresses these issues. Direct services to the colleges from the League could greatly enhance the opportunities for success.

Recommendations:

The Ad Hoc Task Force on Grants and Development recommends that the Community College League of California initiate efforts to provide the following direct services to colleges and district offices:

Collect and disseminate regular information about grants from state and federal government, private foundations and corporations. This should include timelines, priorities for funding, and eligibility and budget requirements.

Serve as advocate for community college funding with state and federal government, private foundations and corporations.

Serve as advocate with state Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to provide seed money and matching funds to assist colleges in resource development.

Develop a list of consultants that can provide grant writing assistance to colleges.

Work with the state Chancellor's Office to improve its grant processes.

Develop boiler plate information on California and its community colleges, a method for keeping this information updated and ways to make it available electronically to colleges and district offices.

Educate community colleges concerning the importance of resource development to improve their abilities to serve students and their communities and achieve their goals and objectives.

Provide linkages among those colleges and district offices interested in forming coalitions with other colleges and district offices to pursue grant funding.

Provide information and assistance to colleges on how to form partnerships with public institutions, private agencies or business for grant funding (required by many funding programs).

Review other suggestions for service to the colleges and implement as feasible.

Grant Survey Results

Single Campus Districts and
Multi-campus District Colleges (SD & MC)

1. How many staff members at your campus have grant writing and/or coordination of grant writing as a major part of their assigned duties?

	MC	SD	Total
a. None	14	12	26
b. 1 - 2	31	28	59
c. 3 - 4	2	4	6
d. 5 or more	2	1	3

2. How well do you feel these staff members are informed about grants available from government, private foundations and corporations?

	Govt	Priv Fndns	Corps
a. Not at all	5	13	20
b. Little	12	33	36
c. Moderately well	29	28	23
d. Very well	28	11	7
e. Highly informed	12	1	0

3. How successful do you feel your campus has been in securing grants from these sources?

	Govt	Priv Fndns	Corps
a. Not at all	3	20	26
b. Little	22	40	47
c. Moderately well	31	26	17
d. Very well	25	7	4
e. Highly successful	11	1	0

4. How often do the following factors prevent your campus from being more successful in obtaining grants?

	Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently
A. Not enough info about grants	6	54	24	7
B. Info not received in timely manner	1	38	37	15
C. Not enough staff to write grants	2	15	28	48
D. Staff lacks knowledge/skills in grantwriting	15	34	26	18
E. Staff too busy with other priorities	1	15	26	49
F. Partnerships to apply for grant are too difficult to secure	9	45	31	8
G. Grantwriting not an institutional priority	20	37	22	12

5. Estimate the amount of funds received by your campus from grants *(funds from external sources for which a proposal must be submitted and for which there is competition)* in the 1997-98 school year?

	Govt	Priv Fndns	Corps
A Up to $25,000	1	32	46
$25,000-$100,000	8	25	22
$100,000-$500,000	30	13	7
$500,000 - $1 million	22	6	1
Over $1 million	31	4	1

6. What kinds of services do you feel would assist your campus in being more successful in obtaining grants?

	Not helpful	Somewh at helpful	Helpful	Very helpful	Extremely helpful
A. Regular info about available grants from govt, fndns, and corps	4	10	17	28	33
B. Technical assistance in proposal writing	7	12	23	29	24
C. Grant writing training for staff	5	17	30	23	19
D. Boiler plate info on California and its community colleges	3	15	19	31	27
E. Assistance in forming coalitions with other districts to apply for a grant	1	24	21	27	22
F. Assistance in forming partnerships with public institutions, private agencies or businesses to apply for a grant	1	17	16	28	31

7. What do you believe are the current funding priorities for your campus as a grant applicant?

(List is prioritized)	
C. Teaching strategies to improve classroom learning	73
B. Other instructional equipment	67
D. Student support services	65
A. Computers	60
G. Community relations	37
E. Welfare reform	31
F. Economic development	29

8. Selecting from your response to #7, what are the 3 highest priorities for securing grant support at your district office? *(To be published.)*

9. Please give one or two examples of highly successful programs that were funded by grants to your district ofice in the 1997-98 school year. (Please give title of program, funding source and a few sentences about what was accomplished.) *(To be published.)*

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